

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA
ATLANTA DIVISION**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, <i>ex</i> :	:
<i>rel. MELISSA SIMMS POWELL, et</i> :	:
<i>al.,</i> :	:
	:
Plaintiffs, :	CIVIL ACTION NO.
	1:08-CV-2277-RWS
v. :	
	:
AMERICAN INTERCONTINENTAL :	
UNIVERSITY, INC., <i>et al.</i> , :	
Defendants. :	

ORDER

This case comes before the Court on Defendants' Motion for Assignment of Case to Magistrate Judge for Supervision of Discovery, Status Conference, and Entry of a Protective Order [80]. After a review of the record, the Court enters the following order.

Defendants have moved this Court to refer all discovery matters to a Magistrate Judge as the parties are involved in complex litigation and cannot agree on many key discovery issues, including a protective order and the scope of e-discovery. See 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); LR 72.1(D) NDGa. As well, the Defendants note that due to the frequency of the parties' disputes, efficiency

would be better served by referring the matter. Plaintiffs are concerned that due to the Defendant's prior lead counsel's litigious history, referring the matter to a Magistrate Judge would only increase delay as any Magistrate Judge decision is appealable as a matter of right. See FED. R. CIV. P. 72(a). However, even if discovery is referred, this Court has the authority to withdraw the referral if a party abuses the process.

It is hereby **ORDERED** that the Clerk of Court assign this case to a Magistrate Judge of this Court for the management of discovery. All pending motions and any further discovery-related disputes are hereby **REFERRED** to the Magistrate Judge assigned to the case.

SO ORDERED this 9th day of June, 2011.



RICHARD W. STORY
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE